

# THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY.

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VOL. I.

MAY, 1921.

No. 5.

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## The Endeavor after a Philosophical Faith.\*

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Not human reason, but divine revelation is the source of faith. It is the very nature of faith to accept what God has revealed. The object of saving faith is Jesus, the Lord, the Savior.

"Abraham against hope believed in hope that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb; he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what He had promised He was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him, but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus, our Lord, from the dead; who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." Rom. 4, 18—25.

Abraham's faith is set forth in the Scriptures as an example for our faith. The source of Abraham's faith was *not his own reason*. His reason told him that he and Sarah must remain childless. But God said, "So shall thy seed be." That was a wonderful revelation to Abraham. Abraham believed what God had *revealed* to him; he "against hope believed in hope." "He was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what He had promised He was able also to perform." God's promise was that of the Woman's Seed, the Savior. This promise Abraham believed. The *promised Messiah* was the object of his faith. "This was not written for his sake alone, but for us also."

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\* A Review of *Die Grundwahrheiten der christlichen Religion*, by Reinhold Seeberg. Seventh edition, 1921. Deichertsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Leipzig and Erlangen. 182 pages, 5¼×8½.

Paul warns against any endeavor after a philosophical faith when he writes to Timothy: "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called; which some professing have erred concerning the faith." 1 Tim. 6, 20. 21.

The faith which obtains the kingdom of God is not a faith which results from dialectic reasoning and speculative philosophy, but is the simple, childlike trust of the Christian in the promises of God in His Gospel. "Verily, I say unto you," says Jesus, "who-soever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." Mark 10, 15.

Over against the Christian's simple, childlike faith, which accepts the words of God at their face value, and rests assured that all mysteries in the Christian religion are such only because man with his finite and sinful reason cannot comprehend the infinite God, there has ever been the endeavor on the part of man after a philosophical faith, an endeavor to reduce the eternal verities of God to a philosophical system, so as to make them appeal to man's reason. In this attempt truth has always been sacrificed, and the floodgates have been opened to a multitude of human opinions and false doctrines in the realm of religion.

Church history amply bears witness to this attempt. This attempt has been renewed in every age, and will continue to the end of days. It has appeared under different names and different forms, but it has always resulted in the denial of the truth, either in whole or in part. The thinker who supposed that he had solved a problem in reality undermined the doctrine.

During the period of Scholasticism, from Anselm to Aquinas, the theologians of the Church collectively endeavored to rationalize Christianity and to construct a philosophy of religion. Anselm stated his own position thus: "Neque enim quaero intelligere, ut credam; sed credo, ut intelligam." Faith was to be given first place and reason second place; but in giving reason a place at all in matters of faith he was treading on dangerous ground and actually recommended the endeavor after a philosophical faith. In his tract, *Cur Deus Homo*, he calls it a neglect of duty, if, after we are confirmed in our belief, we do not study to *understand* what we believe — "negligentia mihi videtur, si postquam confirmati sumus in fide, non studemus quod credimus intelligere."

And what else than deference to human reason was it when Aquinas, the great teacher of Roman Catholic theology, restricted



his dictum that the attainments of reason are inadequate for the apprehension of the knowledge of God and must be augmented by divine revelation, by saying that the Scriptures must be understood in the light of the *interpretation of the councils and the Fathers?*

Not all scholastics, however, acknowledged the *priority of faith* in the attempt to rationalize the Christian religion. The dictum of Abelard: "Non credendum, nisi prius intellectum," is the exact reverse of Anselm's "Credo, ut intelligam." Abelard was the first one who formally set forth the so-called *moral influence theory* of the atonement, according to which Christ's Passion was not the atonement for man's sin, the *satisfactio vicaria*, but simply an exhibition of the greatness of God's love as a means of winning the sinner.

The attempt of Rationalism, during the last half of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century, to substitute a system of ethics for the doctrine of redemption, was but another, though cruder, endeavor after a philosophical faith; it was another attempt, in its final analysis, at deceiving mankind by setting aside the "Thus saith the Lord."

The same speculative and rationalistic tendency in matters religious is clearly to be seen in so-called *modern theology*. Much of the theology that is taught in the theological universities of Europe and of this country, and much of the preaching which is heard from modern pulpits, is of this type. Reinhold Seeberg, whose book, *Die Grundwahrheiten der christlichen Religion* (The Fundamentals of the Christian Religion), has prompted this article, is one of its exponents.

The title of Seeberg's book is promising. So is also his brief preface to the latest edition. He writes: "May the book be of service in maintaining the old truth at a time when it is sorely needed." And in the opening paragraph of the first chapter or lecture (the book contains sixteen lectures, delivered to the students at the University of Berlin) Seeberg promises to give to his readers a real treat, saying, "Nil carum nisi quod prodest."

We cannot, however, long remain in the company of a man whose words and behavior we closely observe without finding him out. Seeberg does not long deceive us. The very first sentence in the second paragraph of his book arouses within us the suspicion that the title of the book is misleading. He says: "My purpose is to present Christianity as a religion as I understand it, and as,

according to my opinion, it can and should be made accessible to the understanding of the learned of our day."

Seeberg uses the terminology of the Bible: he speaks of God, of Christ, and of the Spirit; of sin and grace; of repentance, regeneration, and conversion; of faith and love; of justification and sanctification; of the means of grace, the Word, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper; of prayer; of hell and heaven.

Seeberg uses the phraseology of Christian literature. He says: "Jesus gives life, for He is the Life," p. 114; "The cross of Christ is in the very center of the Christian religion," p. 141; "The way of salvation is the way of the cross of Christ," p. 138; "'They saw Jesus alone'—these are the real builders of the Church," p. 157; "Whatsoever stands in the way of the message of Christ must be most emphatically opposed," p. 158; "Not men, but God gave faith and love. God alone it is who can and will keep these for us," p. 163; "The Christian prays in the name of Jesus," p. 163; "No one will be saved who in this life was not found in faith and love," p. 181.

Seeberg refers to Jesus, to Paul, to Luther, to the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, and to Luther's Small Catechism, and makes them sponsors for his doctrines. He denounces all false religions, saying that the Christian religion alone is true, alone will satisfy the needs of the soul, alone will endure.

But Biblical terminology is not used by Seeberg in its original Biblical sense; and the phraseology of Christian literature is not employed by him in its usual meaning. He comes to us in sheep's clothing. This is characteristic of his kind. He belongs to the most radical type of modern theologians. The title of his book ought to read: *A Total Denial of All the Fundamental Truths of Christianity*.

Seeberg shall be permitted to speak for himself. It is not just to condemn a man unheard. "Does the Christian religion teach realities?" (*Sind es Realitäten, die das Christentum verkündigt?*) To this question, which Seeberg himself propounds, he answers:—

"There was a time—and it still exists for some to-day—when it seemed very easy to answer this question. The doctrines of the Christian religion are realities for 'they are found in the Bible.' The Bible is verbally inspired, God cannot lie; therefore, what the Bible declares to be true is real. So it has been said; and many generations of Christians have been satisfied therewith.

"Why should we to-day not be satisfied with this answer? Two conclusive reasons are against it. It is an acknowledged fact that the Bible



contains errors of the writers and contradictions in its narratives. As little as this can shake the faith of the pious Christian, just so destructive it is for that theory," *i. e.*, that the Bible is the inspired Word of God; "for then God would be the author of errors. But this is not the main issue. In various apologetical ways an attempt has been made to uphold the theory, but we cannot let our faith depend upon such trickery. It is more important to know that our question cannot be answered in this manner.

"The argument has been advanced that the contents of the Christian religion are realities because the authors of the Holy Scripture have believed them to be such, being of the opinion that they were inspired by God. But how do we know that those men were really 'inspired'? If we rest our faith upon this, then we must be able to assure ourselves, beyond a doubt, of this historical fact. Again, as it is possible that we to-day err as to the reality of the Christian religion, even so those men of the Bible could also have erred. Finally, is it not possible that the sovereignty of God was at one time actually manifested, and that it is now no longer manifested? We learn that in this wise we make no headway. In all questions pertaining to the life of the soul, the soul cannot be satisfied with a certainty from without (*genuengt dieser eben niemals eine fremde Gewissheit*), but the soul must by its own experience have arrived at a certainty (*sie muss aus eigener Erfahrung der Sache gewiss geworden sein*).

"What do we call real? It is a well-known fact that philosophy, since the days of Kant, has labored hard to answer this question. The educated Christian cannot ignore this fact. It is rude (*es ist ungezogen*) to set aside in religious matters that sharp and careful thinking which is deemed proper to be applied to the small things of this life. . . .

"The difficulty for us increases in a field where we are not, first of all, concerned with historical facts, which could be 'seen' or 'heard,' but with the reality of metaphysical quantities (*uebersinnlicher Groessen*) — the sovereignty of God and the kingdom of God. Here it will not suffice to rely upon miracles and signs which once upon a time were performed. We are, first of all, concerned with such things as are done at the present time." (pp. 37. 38.)

These words of Seeberg leave no room for doubt as to his attitude toward the Bible; toward the great historical facts in the life of Christ: His birth, death, and resurrection; toward the miracles; and even toward the absolute assurance that any religion is the true one. After such an acquaintance with Seeberg we are not surprised that he speaks of God's appearing in the garden of Eden as a "pious legend," p. 8; and that he refers to the story of the Fall as "an old rationalistic fairy-tale," p. 110.

Abelard's "Non credendum nisi prius intellectum" is the measuring-rod which also Seeberg applies to the Christian religion. Conformably, he says, "There are three tests to which all religious

systems must be subjected: logic, history, and the intellectual needs of the soul." (p. 22.)

The Bible has no place in Seeberg's metaphysical speculation as to religion. *Pasa graphe theopneustos*, writes Paul to Timothy, 2 Tim. 3, 16; and Jesus says, "The Scripture cannot be broken." John 10, 35. But Seeberg says, "How do we know?" — "To the Law and to the Testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Is. 8, 20. But Seeberg says, Not to the Law and the Testimony, but to "logic, history, and the intellectual needs of the soul." — The psalmist says: "I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Thy testimonies are my meditation. . . . Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." Ps. 119, 99. 105. But Seeberg refers to an "educated Christian," to Kant, who labored hard to tell us what is real. — Paul says: "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins. . . . But now is Christ risen from the dead." 1 Cor. 15, 17. 20. But Seeberg informs us that such a great historical fact does not concern us first of all; we should rather be first concerned about the "reality of metaphysical quantities."

Seeberg is making great demands upon us when he asks that we cast aside our Bible, given us by God, and such trustworthy witness as the prophets, evangelists, and apostles, and accept his philosophy instead. He is asking much of us when he suggests that we ignore the entire history of the Christian Church in its trials and victories from Christ and the apostles down to the present time and our own realization of the blessings of Christianity, and, instead, accept his musings in a matter of such vital importance. Or does he not ask this of us? Then *we* ask, What does Seeberg *really* mean when he closes his book by saying, "Gentlemen, we have now finished. I hope that we have not labored in vain"?

After these premises we know what we may not expect of Seeberg in answer to the great question of the ages, "What think ye of Christ?" To Seeberg Christ is not the God-man in the sense of the Scripture; not the Savior, who by His *satisfactio vicaria* redeemed us and all mankind from sin and eternal death. Seeberg, moreover, reminds us of that ancient enemy of Christianity, Porphyry, a Neo-Platonic philosopher of the third century, who said that Jesus should not be blasphemed, but that the Christians who worship Him as their God are to be pitied.



Seeberg must again be permitted to speak for himself. He devotes a special chapter to "The Person of Christ," and another to "The Work of Christ." In the opening paragraph of the first of these two chapters he says:—

"There are two historical facts which we must try to understand. How could the Humblest among men feel Himself to be the Lord and Judge of the world, and how could He who died on the cross be confessed and worshiped by His followers as Lord and God?—for both of these two terms are applied to Him in the New Testament." (p. 116.)

Seeberg's endeavor after a philosophical faith will not permit him to let the case rest there. He continues:—

"As long as there have been Christians, both of these facts have been acknowledged, and both questions have been thought over. What, then, does history"—logic, history, and the intellectual needs of the soul, not the Bible, are Seeberg's three measuring-rods applied to religion—"teach us as to these questions? Paul and John have presented the facts as above stated, and their congregations did not think otherwise. For them the Man Jesus, who was a genuine and true man, was at the same time, in some way, the only-begotten Son of the Father, who, in heavenly glory, had been with God, and who, after He had here on earth taught, labored, suffered, died, and arisen, again was in possession of divine glory and power" (the *kenosis*, which the New Testament does not teach), "so that He, the Eternal, lives as the Lord of His Church, and governs the hearts of men.

"These thoughts represent the religious faith of the time of the apostles, but they do not offer a theoretical solution of our questions." (p. 116.)

Seeberg then calls attention to the teachings of the Gnostics and the apologists of the early Church, to Arius and Athanasius, and then continues:—

"But also this mental process did not go beyond mere religious statements. As a mere assertion it was great, for it took in the whole case. As a theory it remained incomprehensible—simply one, and yet three—; but incomprehensible theories will not do, for they do not explain. One can understand that the practical application soon arrived at this thought: Father, Son, and Spirit are three persons, as three angels or three men, who, nevertheless, are one, inasmuch as they are of a similar kind and similar essence. Only by means of various trickeries (*durch allerhand Kuensteleien*) could this conception be defended against the objection of teaching tritheism." (pp. 117. 118.)

Thereby the doctrines of the deity of Christ and of the Trinity are sacrificed as far as Seeberg is concerned. Why? All in the attempt to bring the infinite God and His wonderful works within the narrow compass of finite and sinful human reason.

For his denial of Christ's deity Seeberg introduces Luther as sponsor. He makes him say, without quoting him:—

"No one will suspect that Luther sacrificed in any part the deity of Christ. But to him the essence of God is not an infinite substance, but God is the personal, intellectual will of love, the almighty sovereignty of love. This eternal energy of love (*ewige Liebesenergie*) filled the human soul of Jesus, so that it became its content. That is the deity of Christ." (pp. 119. 120.) *Sic!?*

Seeberg then proceeds to say that the indwelling of God in Christ and in the Christian is different only as to quantity and not as to quality. "Was uns durch ihn wird, wird ihm aus Gott; und was in uns klein und bruchstueckweise, gehemmt und zerstreut geschieht, geschah in ihm ganz." (p. 121.)

"The will of God leading men unto salvation, or the redeeming spirit of God," says Seeberg, "has in Jesus entered into history; He" (*i. e.*, "*der die Geschichte der Menschheit zum Heil fuehrende Gotteswille oder der erloesende Gottesgeist*") "was made man in Jesus and worked in a human-historical way (*menschlich-geschichtlich*) in the words and deeds of Jesus. This special divine will of history (*besondere goettliche Geschichtswille*) used the Man Jesus as His organ and as the clear and precise expression of His essence. This is done by the Divine Spirit, who, at the baptism of Jesus, enters into Him for perpetual communion. But already before this did the Divine Spirit prepare and equip Jesus for such communion and for the mission therewith implied. He created the Man Jesus, as He did the first man, for His organ, — that is the final and deepest meaning of the ancient historical tradition that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary, — and He, from the very first moment of the existence of the Man Jesus, entered into union with Him, influenced Him, and permeated His sensibility, thinking, and desire. In this manner the Man Jesus was made 'Son of God,' being made the vehicle of the divine spirit and of His work of salvation among men." (p. 122.)

Seeberg is very frank and bold in his denial of the deity of Christ and of the Trinity. The Biblical doctrine of the Trinity he says is "mythology" and "unchristian polytheism"; and he accuses the believer in the Trinity of sophistical reasoning. (p. 127.)

Denying the *satisfactio vicaria*, Seeberg says: —

"By permitting all sufferings to come upon Him, without wavering in His righteousness, Jesus Christ, the Righteous, proved the inherent power of that which is good (*bewaehrte er die Kraft des Guten*), and thereby — suffering and dying — He atoned for the sins of men." (p. 141.) "The idea of a sacrifice," says Seeberg, "has been borrowed from the religion of paganism." (p. 143.)

What, then, according to Seeberg, is the essence of Christianity? It is "sovereignty and faith, the kingdom and love." Christ works faith in us, says Seeberg, by "making the sovereignty of God effective in our hearts," and teaches us to love by "showing us the kingdom of God." (p. 134.)



Of course, Seeberg would not lead men to salvation by the preaching of the old Gospel of the crucified Savior, but every one, he says, who speaks of the sovereignty of God speaks the Word of God and expresses God's will; and such speaking of the sovereignty of God has the inherent power to lead men to God, to salvation, for inasmuch as man's speaking of God "is heard and becomes psychologically effective, it operates as the almighty will of God." (p. 149.)

Finally, of the bliss of heaven, which the Bible depicts to us in beautiful language and thus awakens in us the desire to enter into the eternal mansions which Christ has prepared for all who believe in Him, Seeberg says: —

"Phantasy may have its own musings as to it, — you may think of Dante or of various other books which speak of heaven or of hell, — and this is your privilege. Let me not speak of it, for I would rather, also in this case, apply the words of the poet who said that we should not *magna parvis tenuare modis*, that is, we should not speak of sublime things in our own small way (*einem grossen Text eine kleine Melodie geben*)."

We suggest that a more fitting close would have been if Seeberg had said, Why make much ado about nothing? For, surely, to a man of Seeberg's type of theology the heaven which Christ has dearly bought for us must mean nothing. Seeberg's religion is simply "Diesseitsreligion," and of a very poor type at that.

We cannot argue with Seeberg on the basis of the Bible. He made it very clear to us from the outset that the Bible is not to him the inspired Word of God and not the norm according to which he tests whether a religion is true or false. He did not prove, nor did he even make any serious attempt to prove, that the Bible is not the Word of God. He simply sets it aside, and in place of God's revealed religion puts his own philosophical system. That this is true and worthy of acceptance he also does not prove. On the contrary, he says: "*As it is possible that we to-day err as to the reality of the Christian religion*, even so also those men of the Bible" — he is speaking of the inspired writers — "could have erred."

Seeberg reminds us of another prominent German theologian, whom we heard a number of years ago make the remark: "This is what we teach to-day; whether or not we shall so teach twenty years hence we do not know," and who closed his lecture with the words: "So, meine Herren, nun haben Sie gehoert, wie in einer deutschen theologischen Studierstube gedacht wird."

But can that help us any in our religion to know what or how a German theologian thinks in his study? There is too much at stake! Life is short, and eternity is without end! To know what will become of me in eternity, and whether or not I am now in God's favor and am serving Him in a manner acceptable to Him, I must have a more sure ground for my faith. The Bible, or the Christian religion which it teaches, has stood every test to which it has been put, and has given unto many, many thousands that peace of God which surpasseth all understanding and which Christ, the Son of God, purchased for us with His blood; while the philosophical religious systems of men have never satisfied the spiritual needs of the soul and have, for this very reason, been undergoing continual changes from age to age in their vain attempt to improve upon God's order of salvation. As the mysteries of salvation did not and could not originate in the mind of man, but in the heart of God, so it will ever be beyond man to bring them within the narrow compass of his human, finite, and sinful reason. "Fides non est contra rationem, sed supra rationem."

Christ says: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." John 14, 6. This Christ, however, is He of whom John says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." John 1, 1—4. 14. "The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John 1, 7. This is the Christ whom "the Jews sought the more to kill because He had said also that God was His Father, *making Himself equal with God*," John 5, 18, but who answered the question of the Jewish Sanhedrin, "Art Thou, then, the Son of God?" by replying, "Ye say that I am." Luke 22, 70.

In the light of the Bible, then, Seeberg's religious system, denying the deity of Christ and the *satisfactio vicaria*, is destructive criticism of the worst type, for under the guise of Christianity it annihilates the very fundamentals of the Christian religion. Yet it is the kind of theology which is taught in many theological universities here and abroad, and which is preached, either in the same crude or in a more "refined" form, from many so-called Christian pulpits of our day. For this reason we have devoted



more than ordinary space to Seeberg's book. Such a sample of *modern theology* as Seeberg gives us, coming from Germany even in the year 1921, will help us to understand how the minds and hearts of men are being poisoned with subversive teachings, and why the visible Church of our day has been reduced to its deplorable condition, as also what we must look for, if this crime-wave in theology will be permitted to spend its force.

On the other hand, such effusions of unbelief ought to arouse us to a greater appreciation of our heritage of the truth and to a greater activity in proclaiming by word, spoken and written, and by deed, within and without our circles, as the many opportunities present themselves, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the God-Man and only Savior, saying with Paul: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Rom. 1, 16.

As Luther, on April 18, 1521, four hundred years ago, stood four-square on the Bible, and therefore refused to recant, so may God in His grace help us ever to remain true to His Word and be not "removed from Him who called us into the grace of Christ unto another gospel, which is not another," though "some trouble us, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ." Over against such Paul says: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Gal. 1, 6—9.

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## Confessionalism of the Missouri Synod.

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### 4. QUALITY AND CHARACTER.

#### *B. Relation of the Confessions to Scripture.*

It was a leading principle of the Church of the Reformation to establish matters of faith not from the writings of the fathers, but solely from the Holy Scriptures, and, consequently, not to bind consciences by doctrinal decisions of the fathers.

*Dr. Walther, at Milwaukee, Wis., August 14—19, 1884.*<sup>1)</sup>

In Bauer's *Correspondenzblatt*, Nos. 8 and 9 (1859), the statement is made that there are two tendencies in the Lutheran Church of the present time, "one of which regards the development of doctrine as finished in the sixteenth century and under no con-

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1) *Syn. Conf. Report*, 1884, p. 73.

sideration goes beyond the sixteenth century view-point; the other is a friend of progress on the basis of Holy Scripture and history, as required by the needs of the time and the guidance of God. The advocates of this tendency believe in, and strive for, a consummation of the Church, not only as regards its external form and life, but also as regards the doctrine and the manner of formulating doctrine (*Fassung*).” The writer states that the former tendency is most strikingly represented by the Missouri Synod, whose “traditional” Lutheranism is described as follows: “For all arguments from Scripture in matters that seem novel and in no way affect fundamental doctrines these people always have this answer ready: All heretics appeal to Scripture, or, That is what such and such a heretic has said; just as if Holy Scripture really were a dangerous or obscure book that cannot be understood without an authoritative interpretation, or as if *only* our fathers in the sixteenth century had held the key to the Scriptures. At times when controverted points are to be established from Scripture, one can hardly trust his eyes and ears when seeing or hearing from orthodox Lutherans, who, with all other Lutherans, accept as the leading principle the sole authority of Holy Scripture in matters of faith (cf. Formula of Concord, Summary Concept, etc., Introd.), such statements as these: ‘You have to understand Scripture in the light of the fathers’; ‘The church-principle takes precedence of the Scripture-principle’; ‘You must trust Luther and the fathers to have had a better understanding of Scripture than yourself’; ‘You can be assured of the Scriptural character of a certain doctrine only when you have the evidence that the particular doctrine is found in the writings of Luther and of the fathers; — something is believed and accepted as the true Word of God *only* when it is found in Luther and the old teachers.’[!] These and similar statements may not be meant in as bad a sense as their language imports, but they are manifestly based on a confounding of the material principle of Scripture (the analogy of faith) with theology or the measure of Scripture-knowledge attained by a certain age, and they can be explained only on this ground.”

In reporting this stricture upon the confessionalism of the Missouri Synod, Walther remarks: “It is shocking indeed that an attempt can be made in Germany to impute to our Synod such principles, and that this imputation is presented not even as an inference drawn by our opponents, but as a doctrine that has been expressed in so many words by our Synod; for that is the meaning



which the author's use of quotation-marks is to convey. However, God be praised that men can get at us in no other way than by shamefully misrepresenting our teaching and by imputing to us principles which we abominate ourselves." 2)

Fifteen years later Walther reviewed the charge that the Missouri Synod had inverted the relation of faith to the Scriptures and to the Lutheran Confessions from another angle, when he wrote:—

"The assertion is made that we are in a state of theological stagnation; that our theology is nothing but a mechanical absorption by our intellect and memory of the theology of our fathers, a lifeless repristination of the same, a servile submission to the doctrinal decisions of the dogmaticians of the seventeenth century, or at any rate to those of Luther and of our Church in her confessional and other writings of a public character; and that with us *Autos epha* 3) takes the place of Scripture-proof. To those who raise this charge against us we can only say this: Come and see! Pass from parish to parish, from church to church within our organization and see whether the dominant feature in them is not a live knowledge gained by experience and matured amidst inward conflicts rather than a dead orthodoxism so-called. Attend the conferences which our pastors hold regularly in the interval between our annual synodical conventions, and see whether there is manifested at these meetings the commercial spirit which regards the pastoral office as one of the crafts for making a living—a spirit, alas! which we had occasion to observe all too frequently in the land of science; 4) or whether there is not rather seen at these meetings an active theological life and a concern to know how a servant of Christ 'ought to behave himself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God.' 5) Take part in our synodical conventions and see whether there is a tendency of *jurare in verba magistri*, 6) or whether there is not rather the spirit of Luther manifested, who said: 'Except I am overcome with testimonies from Holy Scripture or defeated by manifest, plain, and clear reasons and arguments, I cannot and will not recant anything.' Did not Krummacher, of the unionistic Reformed Church, *e. g.*, after a slight inspection of our Missouri Synod raise the charge

2) *Lehre und Wehre*, 1860, p. 61 f.

3) An appeal to the statement of some great teacher; "Ipse dixit!"

4) Germany.

5) 1 Tim. 3, 15.

6) See Note 2.

of inconsistency against us, saying that 'as regards doctrine, our Synod represents a conception of the formal principle which has quite frequently been termed the Biblicism<sup>7)</sup> of the Reformed'?<sup>8)</sup> We think a member of the unionistic Reformed Church could hardly have accorded us a greater encomium than this. For if faithful adherence to the Scripture-principle, which the Reformed Church falsely claims for itself, is a fact and reality with us, we are true Protestants, true Lutherans.

"Now it is indeed a fact that our publications hitherto have been characterized by continuous citations from the older orthodox teachers of our Church in support of our own theses. This has indeed created the impression that our theology lacks independence and is dogmatical traditionalism and lifeless repristination. But it is simply owing to the conditions which confronted us at the beginning, and which still confront us, that we had to make our [theological] *début* in this manner. We regret that we were denied the inestimable advantage which our fathers had, of battling against the enemies of our Church surrounded by a cloud of Lutheran witnesses. On the contrary, the very men who lay claim to the Lutheran name with us were our fiercest opponents, and bent on denying our claim that our doctrine is that of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. When we Lutherans of America once more unfurled the good old banner of our Church and rallied around it in close formation, while all around us Zwinglianism, Schwaermmerism,<sup>9)</sup> and Rationalism were sailing under a Lutheran flag, the cry went up at once: Another sect! Some cried: You are headed towards Rome! others declared: You are unionists! still others: You are independentists! You are pietists, fanatics, Donatists, Calvinists, — who could repeat the names of all the sects that were said to have risen again in us? To be brief, we were said to be anything and everything except what we ourselves declared that we wished to be: champions of the doctrine of the Reformation, *Lutherans*. Under these circumstances, what could we do, what

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7) "Scripturarismus."

8) *Deutsches Leben in Nordamerika*. Reiseeindrücke von H. Krummacher. Neusalz a. O. 1874, p. 103 f.

9) There is no adequate standard English term for the German "Schwaermerei." The attempted transliteration is a suggestion. The English language has adopted many terms from other languages by giving them an English termination. Why cannot this custom be followed in the present instance?



were we compelled to do, if we did not wish to be branded as a sect? As long as we were denied the character of true Lutherans, we had to appeal again and again to the previous Confessions and to the unquestionably faithful old teachers of our Church to become witnesses in our behalf. And this we did in such a manner that, unless one refused to see, he was compelled to see that we did not follow those faithful teachers of our Church blindly, but from a vital conviction, not as insipid parrots and imitators, but as their sons who were always able to say: 'I believe; therefore have I spoken.'

"True, the Confessions and their champions were our guides; but it was the Scriptures to which we suffered ourselves to be guided by them. At all times and at every point we were ultimately in a position to be able to say: 'Now we believe, not because of thy saying'; for we have read ourselves, and recognized that your teaching is the truth of God. Although the pure Confessions of our Church especially have seemed of priceless value to us, we have never submitted even to these writings as to a dogmatical law that has been imposed on us, but we have received them as an unspeakable gift of grace with glad thanksgiving toward God, because we found our own confession in them. Our American Lutheran Church has had to engage in many a severe conflict with the haughty sects of our country whom we could not meet, self-evidently, with the testimony of our fathers; and those who were witnesses of our conflicts know that the written Word of God proved a weapon to conquer with even in our feeble hands.

"By the way, those who call our theology the theology of the seventeenth century do not know us. While esteeming highly the immense labor of the great Lutheran dogmaticians of that period, still it is not really these dogmaticians to whom we have returned, but, above all, our dear Concordia and Luther, in whom we behold the man whom God has chosen to be the Moses of His Church of the New Covenant to lead His Church forth from its bondage under Antichrist in which it had become merged, by means of the cloudy and fiery pillar of the pure and unadulterated Word of God. Although rich treasures of knowledge and experience are stored in the doctrinal theologies of that period, and although we find joy and delight in studying them day and night, still they are neither our Bible nor our Confessions. On the contrary, even in these dogmaticians we observe occasionally a muddying of that

stream which burst forth in crystal purity in the sixteenth century.”<sup>10)</sup>

The same view has been consistently held by other spokesmen of the Missouri Synod. We can cite only a few striking utterances.

“It was through the ministry of the fathers in the age of the Reformation that our fathers were brought to the knowledge of the light. They recognized the old Gospel which Luther had proclaimed as the light. Their watchword was: Back to Luther; for whoever is led back to him is led back to Holy Scripture. They returned to the Scriptures and the Confessions, and inscribed on their banner these two principles: 1. Holy Scripture alone can establish articles of faith, and determine whether any teaching is true or false, light or darkness; 2. in the symbolical or confessional writings of the Lutheran Church we find the true interpretation of Scripture. — In placing the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church in the foreground they did not put them on a level with Holy Scripture. Nor did they assert two sources from which the knowledge of the light must be drawn: Holy Scripture and the Confessions. The standpoint which our fathers occupied was identical with that which the fathers in the age of the Reformation occupied.”<sup>11)</sup>

“By accepting the Confessions *because* they agree with Holy Scripture we show that we regard the Scriptures as the exclusive source of knowledge of the truth. True, we declare that the Confessions are a norm; however, we regard them only as *norma normata*, that is, as a norm which is itself regulated; while we view the Word of God as *norma normans*, the rule which dominates, defines, and regulates everything. There is no court higher than the Holy Scriptures to which an appeal could be taken from the Scriptures. We accept the Confessions of our Church solely for the reason that there is contained in these confessional writings no other doctrine than that which we have before us in the clear revelation of God’s Word, or for the reason that our Symbolical Writings repeat what God Himself says in His Word.”<sup>12)</sup>

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10) *Lehre und Wehre*, Vol. 21 (1875), p. 65 ff.

11) Prof. F. Lindemann, at the Jubilee Convention at Chicago, July 10—15, 1897. *Ill. Dist. Report*, Mo. Syn., 1897, p. 30.

12) *Central Distr. Report*, Mo. Syn., 1892, p. 48 f.

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## THE THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER.

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### Million Dollar Fund.

The sixth report on the million-dollar offering for the Ohio Synod's Capital University runs the total gift from 235 congregations up to \$454,552.68, and reports one special gift for Divinity Hall of \$100,000. D.

### Membership and Apportionment.

The apportionment system for raising funds for the Synod has caused a shrinkage of the membership in the Norwegian Lutheran Church. A report in the *Lutheran Church Herald* (March 15) states:—

"Most ministers did not need much time to realize that their own figures as reported to the synodical secretary and published in the annual report were used as a basis for the apportionment made. The next thought was the importance of having a membership list that should be accurate. In many church registers there were names of confirmed members whom the pastor had never seen. In one church there were names of people who had not been inside the church for twenty years; others had joined some other denomination, 'on account of the lack of English'; others had moved away. Well, conditions were not the same in all church registers,—it would be very, very far from the truth to say that. Some ministers had always considered it an important duty to have the printed reports tell the truth, even though it meant lots of work.

"Without wanting to dwell on this, the fact is that many pastors reduced the number of confirmed members in their church or churches, and in some cases very considerably."

The report also speaks of losses in membership through persons who move away from their home church, retaining their membership in the same, and declining to join the church nearest to their new location. "This practise has lost us and is still losing us thousands of members." Similar statements might be made of conditions existing in other synods. D.

### "Our Colleges and the Religious Life."

Under the heading given above the *Northwestern Christian Advocate* has the following:—

"In the recent report of the Educational Association of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the following significant expression was recorded:—

"The Church will be happy to know that the association showed an intense interest in the religious functions of our schools. There is no doubt that the religious ideal always has been dominant in them, that the spirit of service has pervaded them, and that Christian character has readily been nurtured within them. But in recent

years, when the struggle for material resources has been so severe and the demands for academic standards so exacting, it has been more difficult to give the needed attention to religious work. The settled purpose that our schools shall be centers of religious power was evident to an unusual degree in this meeting of the association.'

"The question might well be raised following this quotation, Why is a Methodist college? A Methodist college exists not to teach mathematics or chemistry. There is no Methodist mathematics. And yet we are going to our people with calls for millions of dollars to support chairs of science and history and economics. The admission (we are tempted to denominate it a confession) quoted above should give us pause and lead us to inquire how nearly are we making our colleges 'centers of religious power.' So far as the mere impartation of knowledge is involved, the cultivation of intellect or sharpening of wits, the state can do that business fully as well, and in not a few instances better than the more humble church-school.

"There is absolutely no excuse for the existence as a church-school of an institution that does not maintain as its chief aim the spiritual culture of its students."

"Centers of religious power!" Stating it more definitely: Centers of *Christian* influence and power! That is what *our* colleges should be. Of this we may well be reminded. Not only the indifferentism and materialism of our time is seeking to thwart Christian influence and power, but also some of the branches that are taught in the college curriculum have in them an element of danger in this same direction. History tells us that the *Renaissance* — the rebirth of classical culture — brought with it pagan conceptions and pagan morals. We are influenced by what we read and study. The pagan ideas of Greek and Roman mythology and of the classical Greek and Latin literature must be corrected if they are not to work harm. Secular history must be taught from the subjective view-point of the Christian scholar, lest the student fail to see that God overrules the desires and works of the wicked for the fulfilment of His ultimate purpose: the salvation of man. The sciences must not be given a value *per se*, but only inasmuch as they are valuable for that service which the Christian man gives unto his God.

Therefore the chief study at our colleges must be that of the Christian religion and its doctrines. The Bible must be *the* book of instruction during the entire course of study. Parts of the *Greek New Testament* might well be read in the last year. And we see no good reason why, after the Catechism has been studied for four or more years in the vernacular, the student should not in his last two years read and study such a book as Dietrich's *Institutiones Catecheticae* in the Latin original. In doing so he would not only be given the benefit of its doctrinal contents, but also of its Latin. We believe that in this way the college student would not only with increased interest study his Catechism, but would also be better prepared in more than one way to pursue his studies later in the theological seminary.



It goes without saying that much ought to be made of the morning and evening chapel services at the colleges. By a careful selection of Scripture-readings and prayers and occasional chapel-talks by a member of the faculty, the student can be made to feel that these things do not belong merely to the routine of his college life, but supply a real need.

The six years which our students spend at our preparatory schools, or colleges, during the very formative, and, therefore, dangerous period of their life, present great opportunities for exercising Christian influence and power, and, in the same measure, place upon those in charge great responsibilities which they dare not shirk. FRITZ.

### April 18 Observed in Other Churches.

"The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ makes an appropriate suggestion that Sunday, April 17, be utilized by the Protestant ministers of America to give recognition of results which have flowed from Luther's fearless words before Charles V and his council, and to emphasize afresh some of the great truths which came from the Reformation—justification by faith, the duty of obedience to Jesus Christ, the freedom and responsibility of the individual soul, the right of every man to the Bible in his own tongue, the obligation of loyalty to the living God, our only King."

After thus calling attention to the suggestion of the Federal Council of the Churches, the *Northwestern Christian Advocate*, in its issue of April 6, said:—

"This is a most excellent proposal, and, it is sincerely hoped, will be followed up by the great majority of our Methodist pastors. We are talking to-day about reconstruction. We fear there is more talk than action. There is no real and permanent reconstruction except through the truths which the Reformation proclaimed, and which must dominate the life of the world if it is to become a fit place for the habitation of God.

"If the entire time of the sermon cannot be devoted to this important theme, there should at least be given a few minutes for a definite statement of the fact of the anniversary and expression of gratitude that there was given to the world Martin Luther, the great liberator."

### Status of German Missions.

Out of the chaos of international politics and post-war confusion the status of German mission-work in Asia and Africa gradually begins to take on lineaments that permit more accurate judgments. We summarize, in the following, the reports before us.

In East Africa the expulsion of German missionaries (Moravian and Leipzig) was completed last November. The English mission branch of the Moravians has, however, been informed that a resumption of labors in this field is not out of the question. In East Africa the native evangelists are continuing the work without salary. The

English officials now administering German East Africa were impressed by the character and loyalty of the German missionaries, and requested urgently that these men might be permitted to remain, but in vain.

In Southwest Africa the notorious paragraph 438 of the Peace Treaty does not apply. August 31 of last year, General Smuts accepted a declaration of loyalty from the Rhenish missionaries and declared that there would be no interference with their work.

In Hongkong much missionary property was sold at auction, and it is reported that the church edifice of the Rhenish mission there will be given to the Catholics.

On New Guinea the Rhenish and Neuendettelsau missionaries were permitted to work without interruption throughout the war. Now (1921) the Australians have made a regulation that no departing missionary may return, and that no new German missionaries may enter.

From the *Harvest Field* (Mysore, India, 1921) we gather the following data concerning the situation in India:—

The question of the return of German missionaries to the fields from which they had been excluded through the war has been brought to the notice of the religious public by the conference of persons interested in missions held in June last near Geneva, Switzerland. The findings of that conference were sent to the National Council of India for its consideration. A committee of the Council gave much time to the serious examination of the proposals, and the following resolution was unanimously agreed to: "With regard to the return of German missionaries the Council has not departed from the position taken up in 1915, when it expressed the earnest hope that after the war conditions would be such as to make possible the resumption of the former happy cooperation in the task of extending Christ's kingdom. The Council accordingly hopes that the time for the modification of the restrictions placed on the efforts of German Christians to take their share in the evangelization of the world may soon come. The Council, however, does not consider that any good purpose would be served by pressing at present for the reduction of the time limit imposed by His Majesty's Government on the admission of Germans into India. It will, however, watch the situation with a view to taking action when the time seems ripe."

The National Council received a report of its German Missions Committee, which showed that "all the arrangements for carrying on the work of the German mission had worked well." These missions were organized under a special constitution, the institutions were continued, likewise the medical work, and "the theological training classes had been reopened, both the preparatory class and the regular course of three years, under the care of two of the men of the Lutheran Church."

Of transfers of missionary forces we note the following: Basle and the Rhenish mission are cooperating on Sumatra, the Bethel



mission has undertaken work in Java, and Breklum has transferred its activities to the province of Canton, China.

Concerning the status of Catholic missions we find the following in the *New World* (Roman Catholic, Chicago): "For the time being an accommodation has been arranged between the Holy See and the British Empire that within a year, at most, German and Austrian missionaries may return to their former fields of labor. The conditions laid down are not ideal, neither are they impossible of accomplishment. Bishops, prefects-apostolic, and vicars-apostolic cannot return to their missions. In their stead the mission will be presided over by an American citizen or a British subject, together with a treasurer of one or either nationality. The Holy See is to assign an English ecclesiastic, and also a representative of the American hierarchy to deal directly with the British Empire, under appointment by the Holy See. German or Austrian missionaries who are to return to the colonies must reside at least six months in British territory or in the United States. The returning missionaries must be vouched for by one or the other of the two competent authorities. These are the uttermost concessions that can be granted just now. Patience and a large measure of toleration must characterize those who feel they are aggrieved and discriminated against merely because they are Germans or Austrians." GRAEBNER.

### Liberalism Invading the Mission-Fields.

Dr. W. H. Griffith-Thomas, a noted Anglican clergyman of the evangelical school, now laboring in this country and residing in Philadelphia, has stirred up much discussion in Presbyterian circles by his report on the liberalism which he observed during a recent visit to the China mission-fields. On his return to this country, Dr. Griffith-Thomas delivered a number of lectures in which he gave instances illustrating the extent to which liberalism, by which is meant the new theology, which is another term for unbelief, has invaded the ranks of the missionary workers. A large percentage of the missionaries, he declared, entertain the higher critical view of the Bible. For the preaching of the Gospel they substitute social service and institutional work. Of 284 missionaries resident at Shanghai, only four are doing evangelistic work (preaching). Of twenty-six graduates from a "Christian" university in China, it was disclosed that twenty-five had gone back to "full heathen Chinese life." Missionaries who still believe in the inspiration of the Bible have formed a Bible Union which now has a membership of 500, and the resolutions of this Bible Union fully bear out the charges made by Dr. Griffith-Thomas.

The statements of the Anglican, however, have not passed without challenge. Dr. A. J. Brown, a writer on missionary subjects and secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions, has asked him to name the Presbyterian workers who are propagating the new theology in China. However, in a recent issue of the *Presbyterian*, Dr. John Fox of New York quotes damaging statements from one of Dr. Brown's

own books, pointing to a change in the attitude of Chinese converts to specifically Christian teaching. The early converts, says Dr. Brown, believed in the existence of a personal devil and accepted as actual facts the story of the Fall, the virgin birth, and our Lord's resurrection, the implication being that these teachings are not so regarded by Dr. Brown nor are believed by the converts of recent years. Dr. Fox continues:

"The Orient is menaced by the flood tides of rationalistic infidelity, and the new-born churches are in danger of being poisoned or strangled in the cradle or the nursery by unsound missionaries and weak-kneed secretaries, and by the propaganda carried on through books, magazines, and the press in general. How far are our own missionaries affected? or their churches? That rationalism does prevail in China, probably more in Japan, and possibly less in Korea, admits of no doubt. What winds of doctrine are apt to fan its baleful fires into a blaze, what Babcock fire extinguisher can we employ to put them out? This is a question not only for the Foreign Board and the General Assembly, but for the Church at large."

Also Dr. Robert E. Speer, prominently identified with Presbyterian foreign mission work, denies the allegations of Dr. Griffith-Thomas. He specifically declared in the course of an address that there was no noticeable number of missionaries in China who denied the inspiration of the Bible, Christ's deity, or the resurrection of the body, but later made a significant admission when he remarked that "things were worse at home than in the missions." Commenting on Dr. Speer's reply, the *Presbyterian* remarks editorially:

"Two men of equal veracity have made absolutely contradictory statements with regard to the state of missions in China. Dr. Speer read letters from two missionaries to support him. Dr. Thomas is backed by the formal action of six hundred missionaries. No formal evidence has been produced, because there was no proper tribunal competent to receive and handle testimony. There has been nothing but counter statements. To leave the matter thus is to cause a loss to our Foreign Board of possibly hundreds of thousands of dollars. A sound, impartial commission to hear the case and defend missions or correct them is imperative. We reserve judgment until such finding can be had."

GRAEBNER.

### The Creedless Union.

"G. H. T." writes the "California Letter" for *The Lutheran* of March 24. He wrestles with the question whether the city of Washington and California are really the two wickedest places in the world, as a prominent newspaper recently stated. If they are, he thinks that liberalism and faddism is the root of the evil, and some Lutherans are part of the root. He relates:—

"Recently the pastor of the leading Congregational church in Alameda declared from the pulpit that 'Protestantism is slowly dying in the West.' Then he uttered a tirade against 'the present division of the sectarian order' and exclaimed, 'Why all these jangling church-



bells and creeds that clash over forgotten isms?' Several Sundays previously another minister had preached along similar lines. When people are fed on such 'stuff,' it is little wonder that conditions are bad. And right here in Berkeley is a theological seminary, the head of which is not only an ultra-rationalist, but even a blasphemer, who virtually tears the Old Testament to pieces, and even dares to call the God of the Hebrews a 'clan God.' What can you expect from preachers turned out by such an institution? Here is, in part, at least, the cause why religious fads and soul-destroying heresies flourish. The going adrift from the principles of the faith, the casting aside of the essential doctrines of the Gospel, and the advocating of work-righteousness, is leading myriads into abject unbelief. This is one of the reasons why religious fads attract greater attention than many churches.

"There are in the so-called Bay cities, San Francisco, Oakland, Alameda, and Berkeley, perhaps twenty-five so-called Christian Scientist temples, about the same number of Spiritualist societies, and a number of other semireligious sects. Then add to these the large number of Buddhist temples, and we have about one hundred semi-Christian and heathen societies. How can such conditions be changed? By a creedless union, as the Alameda pastor proposes? Thank God, there is still a remnant loyal to the truth. A negative religion has never saved a soul. A compromise with error, which is necessary when Lutherans join in such unionistic movements, will only weaken the force of the Gospel, for persons are judged by the company they keep.

"The Lutheran Church, though not so very strong on the Pacific Coast, still lives, and is beginning to let its light shine. There are also others that are beginning to see the trend of a liberal religion, and are taking a stand for positive truth. Recently, in a neighboring city, a man came to the pastor of a leading Methodist church requesting the use of his church to present a semisecular cause to his people. The pastor told him that the only evening that he could have was on a Friday. The reply was, 'I don't want Friday, but Sunday morning, when there is a good congregation, and when I can get a good collection.' The pastor replied, 'Sir, this church is for the preaching of the Gospel, and I will not allow anything to be presented from my pulpit except the pure Gospel, which I preach morning and evening.' That settled it, and the man left. This was quite in contrast with a Lutheran weakling, who, in order not to offend any one, did quite the opposite. Chancing to meet one of his members, I said, 'Well, what kind of a sermon did you have on Sunday morning?' His reply was, 'We had no sermon.' 'What! No sermon? What was the matter?' 'A man was there who talked for nearly an hour about the Boy Scout Movement, that took the place of the sermon. What do you think of that?' It is a pleasure to note that even if once in a while a pastor forgets himself, there are still some laymen who realize the impropriety and express their disapproval. But it is sad when such a thing is allowed to occur at all in a Lutheran church."

Immediately preceding this account is a report of the centenary celebration of the Protestant missions in Madagascar, at which the Norwegian Lutherans were represented by Rev. A. Gendersen, of Christiania, who joined in the celebration with the London Missionary Society, the Quakers, and the Protestant Mission Society of Paris, and has not been rebuked for his liberalism. D.

## BOOK REVIEW.

*Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.:—*

**The Teaching of English.** *Paul E. Kretzmann, M. A., Ph. D., B. D.*  
Vol. III. Concordia Teachers' Library. 118 pages. \$1.00, net.

"Little need be said regarding the value of English as a study. It is the official language of our country, and the ability to speak, read, and write our own tongue with at least some degree of correctness may be expected from every citizen as a matter of course."

The author is quite right in these remarks found in the opening chapter of his book. And the book is designed to be a guide to teachers, so that their pupils will be given at least a good working knowledge of English. We can dispense with many another thing in the school curriculum if our children learn their three R's well. What we like about Dr. Kretzmann's book is that it insists upon practical methods which will have practical results. A more detailed discussion of the book will be in place in a school journal.

Our Synodical Committee, which passed upon the manuscript, highly recommends this latest addition to the Concordia Teachers' Library because of its "wealth of valuable suggestions" and its "mass of pedagogical information, which is the ripe fruit of many years of scholarship and expert criticism."

FRTZ.

**Conservation in Matters Pertaining to the Church.** *L. Franklin Gruber, D. D.* Reprint from the *Lutheran Quarterly*, January, 1920. 24 pages.

Dr. Gruber treats a very timely subject. "The need of conservation and of greater constructive statesmanship and generalship in the Church," says Dr. Gruber, "should be apparent to every interested observer."

Much of what the essayist says we can heartily subscribe. Speaking of conservation of men for the ministry, he says: "The Church should not only with great wisdom and tact choose out from among its young men such as might have the appropriate qualifications for the Gospel ministry, but it should implore the great Head of the Church so to direct their minds and hearts as to become laborers in the vineyard."

In these strenuous times in which unusually heavy demands are made upon the ministry, Dr. Gruber arraigns congregations and synodical organizations for overworking some of their men. He says: "There is another phase to the conservation of the individual in the Church, especially the individual pastor and professor. Our Church has often made the mistake of overworking, I had almost said abusing or wasting the powers of, some of its men, especially the ablest."



We are glad that the essayist has not overlooked what he chooses to call "conservation in the ramified machinery of the Church." "In the local congregation," he writes, "organizations, clubs, public gatherings of various kinds, etc., not to speak of various devices to raise money for the congregation, are multiplying so fast that they require so much of the pastor's time, as well as that of a select band of lay-workers, that he is just in that far prevented from developing the more important spiritual and other interests of the congregation, and from acquiring great pulpit power."

To the Church which adopts the world's ways in conducting her sacred affairs Dr. Gruber addresses himself thus: "And how about the mere club spirit of part of the modern Church? And how about the sanctimonious subterfuges on the part of the modern Church to raise money by indirect commercial methods, not to speak of questionable chance and other methods, on the plea that it is for a good cause? Just as if the end justifies the means! . . . The Lord's method is to lay by on the first days of the week, according to the blessings received, to give *directly* to His cause, not by some roundabout method whereby the giver gets something himself . . . and the Lord gets what is left. . . ."

But while Dr. Gruber warns against "converting the Sunday pulpit into a mere lecture platform or an attractive entertainment stage," and would not allow "truth to be disregarded and trampled under foot, as if it made no difference what one believes," and rightly says that "it is becoming more and more apparent that it is largely to the Lutheran Church to which American Christianity must look, and is indeed already beginning to look, as the great bulwark of truth against open and more subtle and insidious onslaughts of error," he not only writes in another part of his essay that "to plant Lutheran churches of the same language, whatever that language may be, right under one another's shadow, simply because of difference of synods, is not only unbrotherly and un-Lutheran, but to all outward seeming un-Christian," but even goes so far as to accord first claim on the non-Lutheran Protestant home mission field to the sects and to speak in favor of a cooperative movement of the various Protestant church-bodies on the home and foreign mission fields. "Although the Lutheran Church," he writes, "is not as such *organically* in this great cooperative movement, we must surely look with favor upon such an application of business principles to the business of the Kingdom."

There is no consistency in Dr. Gruber's position, but a clear indication that he, too, as many others, has become infected with the spirit of indifferencism and has weakened under the pressure of the demand made for church union by disregarding the true unity in the Spirit. The plea for doctrinal purity and for "the Church of the *Conservative* Reformation," however, only then serves its purpose when we also reduce it to practise.

FRITZ.

*George H. Doran Co., New York: —*

**A History of the Doctrine of the Work of Christ in Its Ecclesiastical Development.** *Robert S. Franks, M. A., B. Litt.* Vol. I: XIII and 449 pages; Vol. II: VII and 443 pages.

This treatise must command the attention of theologians, not only because of its subject-matter, which is the heart of Christianity, but also

because of its thorough workmanship within the various limitations which the author has placed on himself. As regards these limitations, the author has, in the first place, restricted his research to the activity of the incarnate Logos, thus lopping off at the one end the preincarnation activity of the Messiah, and at the other end the operations coincident with the Second Advent of Christ. It has not been possible, however, to exclude all references to Christ before His First Coming and at His Second Coming. In the main, we have here the dogmatic materials grouped in the old terminology under the head "Office of Christ," in its triple aspect of Prophet, Priest, and King. That the term "work" of Christ has not been restricted to the suffering and death of Christ is a decision of the author that will be applauded. We fear the author will meet with less approbation for his second limitation: the exclusion of the Biblical material for the study of the work of Christ. His treatise deals with the *ecclesiastical* doctrine of the work of Christ and is a great dogmatico-historical essay. Not that Bible references are absolutely wanting in this book: that would be simply impossible, because the ecclesiastical doctrine of Christ is practically the understanding which the Church has had of the Christological texts of Scripture, and this understanding has been expressed either in Scripture terms, or has been accompanied by appeals to Scripture. These references the author has noted as historical facts, but has declined to examine them exegetically. However, his work is not on that account a non-committal reporter's tale, or a loosely connected catalog of declarations which the Church or her leading teachers have made regarding the work of Christ. The author tells us that a third self-limitation was suggested to him by his desire to show not only what had been ecclesiastical teaching regarding the work of Christ, but rather in what manner any particular phase of this teaching had been arrived at. His dominant interest is in system and method, and as he believes to have discovered, so he would lead his readers to observe, whether the Church's doctrine regarding the work of Christ has been determined at any time by authority, by reason, or by experience, or by a more or less subtle synergism of two or more of these factors. As a consequence the author has not recorded every spokesman in the Church who has made some statement regarding the work of Christ, but only those who made an effort "to reduce the doctrine to systematic unity." We believe this is what our age calls "scientific method." Of the authors who have made such an effort not all that they have said regarding the work of Christ is specially examined in this treatise, but only those of their literary products which indicate systematic effort. The rest of the writers, from the Apostolic Fathers to the present time, are mentioned, with more or less comment, for the purpose of establishing continuity. The perusal of the treatise thus becomes something like a journey through a territory that is rather hurried through the commonplace sections and is halted at points of extraordinary interest. Thus there are lifted into prominence for us Ignatius among the Apostolic Fathers; Justin among the apologists; Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen among the earlier, Athanasius, the two Gregories, Cyril, and the Damascene among the later Greek theologians; Tertullian, Hilary, and Ambrose, Augustine, Leo, and Gregory the Great among the Latin theologians. The peaks of medieval Christology the author finds in Anselm, Abelard, Bernard,



Rupert of Deutz, Hugo of St. Victor, Peter Lombard, Alexander of Hales, Thomas Aquinas, and, near the end of this period, in Duns Scotus, Occam and Biel, and Erasmus. The older Protestant theology the author makes culminate in Luther, Zwingli, Melancthon, and Calvin, but the former two he denominates "reformers," the latter two "theologians." The Post-Reformation period is treated in Vol. II, and the ramifications of Christological teaching, as far as it relates to the subject in hand, are traced in Socinus for Socinianism, and Limborch and Grotius for Arminianism, while Quenstedt and Heidegger are presented as types of the final form of the doctrine on the Lutheran and the Reformed side. (To a comparative study of the Lutheran and the Reformed doctrine a special paragraph of six pages is devoted.) The English branch of the Christological tree in this period is represented by Hooker and Pearson on the one hand, and by Owen on the other. The last part of the treatise — proportionately the greatest in this entire *ensemble* of studies — is devoted to Modern Protestant Theology. We are satisfied with the author's view that the beginnings of this theology lie in England and America, and are represented by Locler, Chubbs, Butler, and Edwards, while it was in Germany that this type of theology was developed, and there the author assumes the following groups: 1. Steinbart, Kant, and Hegel for the incipient, 2. Schleiermacher for the central stage, which branches out 3. into the liberal and mediating school (Biedermann, Schweizer, Rothe, and Dorner), 4. the Erlangen School (Hofmann, Thomasius, Frank), 5. Ritschlianism (Ritschl, Lipsius, Kaehler). English and Scotch representatives of this theology up to 1860 are Coleridge, Erskine, Maurice, and Campbell; American and English contemporaries with a special tendency are Bushnell, Dale, Westcott, and Moberley.

At the end of a greater historical period the author sums up the dogmatical labor of that period in a "synthesis." Thus after John of Damascus he presents "the Greek synthesis." He finds in the Greek theology two main aspects that are related to one another: "On the one hand salvation is regarded as the direct result of the Incarnation (a) as a divine revelation, (b) as (along with the death and resurrection of Christ) a communication of life to mankind. Through the death and resurrection operates, according to this view, what is implicitly given already in the Incarnation." (I, 95.) The view of the work of Christ as a sacrifice to God or of a price paid to the devil the author treats as a "negative precondition" of salvation in the *via salutis* of the Greeks. The medieval theology the author introduces with a thoughtful paragraph on the development of the doctrine of penance in the early middle ages. This doctrine did indeed overshadow every other teaching of the Church in that age. The synthesis for this period the author begins to *form* after Alexander of Hales, thus: "There is a relative, but not an absolute necessity of the Incarnation and the Passion: all necessity in this matter ultimately depends upon the divine sovereignty. Subject to the divine decree, however, there was a necessity both of the Incarnation and of the Passion. The Incarnation was necessary even apart from the Fall, in so far as man, a creature of sense as well as intellect, needed a revelation to the senses as well as to the intellect. It agrees with this that the Sacraments were necessary even in the state of innocence, in so far as they serve

for the apprehension of grace." (I, 259.) However, in the author's view the medieval synthesis is not perfected until after Aquinas. (I, 298 f.)

To the Lutheran the most interesting part of this study in Christology is Part III, "The Older Protestant Theology" (I, 351—II, 150), and in this part the review of Luther (I, 353—388), Melancthon (I, 401—413), the Formula of Concord (I, 413—422), Quenstedt (II, 74—94), and the parallelization of the Lutheran and the Reformed doctrines (II, 115—120). The author's acquaintance with Luther's writings seems to be limited to the two Catechisms, Cole's translation of *De Servo Arbitrio*, Stange's Collection of the earlier disputations of Luther, the Smalcald Articles, the Commentary on Galatians, and the Dissertation on the Trinity. For the rest of his source material he relies on the citations in Gieseler's *Ecclesiastical History*, A. Ritschl's *Justification and Reconciliation*, O. Ritschl's *Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus*, Th. Harnack's *Luthers Theologie*, Thomasius, *Christi Person und Werk*, Seeberg's *Dogmengeschichte*, Koestlin's *Luthers Theologie*, and Beard's *Reformation*. In other words, the author works chiefly with secondary sources. He has completely taken over into his treatise O. Ritschl's view of "the fundamental irrationalism which characterizes Luther's doctrine even in its clearest statements, and which becomes almost its hallmark and distinguishing stamp." But he has immensely weakened the best feature of Ritschl's view, *viz.*, that "the positive origin of Luther's irrationalism is in Scripture itself" by claiming for Luther's "irrationalism" "at least a negative preparation" in Luther's Occamist studies. As his authority for this "negative preparation" he claims Hermelink's recent remark: "From the contradictions of the Occamist theology, and especially of the *Collectorium* of Biel, is to be understood the development of the Reformer." The "preparation," then, which Luther received from Occam simmers down to the fact that Luther *opposed* Occam's teaching, and presumably developed his convictions according to the law by which a person learns from his enemies. But before a person can fight an enemy he must have recognized him as an enemy, and that puts us back to the further question: Who taught Luther that Occam must not be accepted as a guide in Christology? Scripture, of course. The Occamist preparation which Luther received becomes thus very "negative." In transcribing O. Ritschl's five essential features of Luther's doctrine of justification the author has missed the cardinal point in Luther's teaching by accepting (at least seeming to do so) Ritschl's fourth feature: "Faith justifies, in that it is the righteousness of Christ, entirely alien to sinners, *but infused into their hearts, and in so far is the ideal fulfilment of the Law.*" It will be difficult to establish the part in this statement which we have italicized even from Luther's earlier writings. Luther takes the so-called *forensic* view of the justifying act: God pronounces the sinner not guilty. The persons whom God justifies are "the ungodly," and these have in their heart nothing but sin and Christ the Atoner. If God justifies those who have "ideally fulfilled the Law," He does a useless thing; for He justifies a person who is already just. Not even Luther's "irrationalism" can be brought in to explain such a view. Luther never entertained it. It is just as much a myth as his "negative preparation by Occam," as regards Christological teaching. The following state-

ment of the author is good: "In order, properly to understand Luther's principle of justification, and especially its conflict with the preceding Catholic doctrine, the following further points must be noted: (1) Luther reinterpreted the word grace. Grace meant originally for the Greek Church little more than the gift through the Logos of the knowledge of God and of the promise of immortality. Augustine gave it a deeper meaning in so far as he took it to mean, on the one hand, the forgiveness of sin, on the other, and this was the chief idea, the infusion of charity which makes merit possible. For Luther grace is not a quality of the soul, the *gratia creata* of the Schoolmen, which is charity, but God's free unmerited favor to the sinner, shown above all in the forgiveness of sins, which, however, is accompanied by the gift of the Holy Spirit. (2) Luther also gave a new meaning to faith. From the beginning of the systematic theology of the Church faith had been conceived as in itself belief or acceptance of Christian doctrine especially as embodied in the Articles of the Creed. According to Clement and Origen this faith was but a beginning, and in order to become a free principle of virtue needed to be transformed into knowledge. According to Augustine and the Schoolmen, on the other hand, belief, in order to become saving faith, needed to be informed by love, the principle of merit. Faith is not in Western Catholicism confidence (*fiducia*). According to Lombard (III, 26, A) such *fiducia* belongs to hope based on merit. Hope apart from merit is presumption. For Luther, on the other hand, faith, though presupposing belief of the Articles of the Creed, is essentially *fiducia*, confidence or trust in the mercy of God revealed in Jesus Christ." By this paragraph the author adjusts himself to the true Luther in his teaching on justification, and incidentally helps to break down the view of Luther's "Augustinism," falsely claimed to have been asserted by Luther himself.

Somebody seems to have nodded in the author's sanctum when the following was written: "With Melanchthon we pass from the Reformers themselves to the theologians of the Reformation. *Melanchthon*, like Zwingli, was a Humanist." This leaves the Lutheran Reformation without any "theologians"; for Luther, in the author's view, was none, and in passing from Luther to the real theologian, Melanchthon, behold, we are introduced to a Humanist, whose "work it was to unite the traditions of Erasmus and of Luther." The author's meaning, of course, is that Melanchthon entered the reformatory movement as a Humanist, and in the course of time became its chief theological exponent, or, to speak with Loofs, whose *Dogmengeschichte* the author here follows, gave the Reformation "a masterly expression." Melanchthon's *intellectual* antecedents have been correctly stated. His *theology*, however, was obtained from Luther, as the earlier Melanchthon more than once acknowledged. The Melanchthon of the first edition of the *Loci*, and of the Augsburg Confession and the Apology, has done genuine theological work. Well does the author say: "The difference between the earlier and the later theology of Melanchthon is seen especially in the change of attitude with regard to the question of authority and reason. In the first edition he thoroughly shares Luther's irrationalism. Christian doctrine is altogether different from philosophy and human reason. Plato and Aristotle have been the ruin of theology in the time of the Fathers and



the Schoolmen, respectively. In the last edition philosophy is, however, at least allowed a usefulness in the explication of theology, and the general attitude towards reason is more favorable." The change in Melanchthon which the author has noted, and dilated upon, is a fact; it is, however, not merely a change of theological method, but of the quality of theology. *Quod non est biblicum, non est theologicum*, is a good old axiom. Hence, while intending to praise Melanchthon, the author really describes Melanchthon's growing theological unfitness when he says: "It goes along with this difference that while in the first edition Melanchthon intentionally devotes attention only to the practical doctrine of the Reformation, in the last he enlarges his view to take in their metaphysical presuppositions, both theological and Christological. But this procedure again inevitably brings about a more favorable attitude to ecclesiastical tradition. Thus while in the first edition Melanchthon expresses his purpose as simply to offer a guide to the study of the Scripture, and tells us that the *Loci Theologici* grew out of lectures delivered on Romans, in the last edition he says that his intention is to gather the doctrine of the Catholic Church on things necessary, as it is handed down in the apostolic literature and the received writers of the Church. In other words, there is an express harking back to ecclesiastical tradition. While Melanchthon originally said, 'Besides the canonical Scriptures there are in the Church no genuine writings,' he later refers not only to the Epistle to the Romans, but to Origen, Cyprian, Augustine, John of Damascus, and Lombard. In a word, in Melanchthon's later theology the old landmarks submerged by the flood of Luther's revolutionary thought begin to reappear."

The Protestant "synthesis," the author thinks, *emerged* in Calvin, whose *Institutes* the author, following Ritschl, regards as "the masterpiece of Protestant theology," and as "a complete and harmonious expression" of the essential Protestant view. Yet he sees the *completion* of the Protestant synthesis" (a) in the general acceptance of the doctrine of the twofold obedience of Christ, as taught in the Formula of Concord, (b) in the tendency more and more to bring the whole material of the doctrine (including the twofold obedience) under the conceptual scheme of the threefold office."

There is a multitude of other points of interest that cannot be touched upon in this review which has already become unusually extended. Suffice it to add one more remark. The author has declared his purpose in this entire study to be this: "to trace the antecedents of the modern doctrine of Christ. The result of my investigation is to show that this doctrine in its most typical form, as developed by Schleiermacher and Ritschl, is no arbitrary opinion on the subject, but that the whole course of doctrinal development has led to it by an immanent necessity." The reviewer was at first inclined to view this statement as one of the limitations under which the author has performed his work, but it seems on second thought that it is more than that: it is an inward limitation such as is wrought by bias. Schleiermacher is the idol of modern theology. Many have become captivated with his seductive thought and his persuasive style. But this is the first time, we believe, that the assertion has been made that in his Christology the silent growth of two thousand years has burst into flower.

*A. Deichertsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Leipzig and Erlangen:—*

**Kirchliche Volksmission.** *Dr. Gerhard Hilbert.* Second revised edition. 52 pages. M. 1.

**Volksmission und Innere Mission.** *Dr. Gerhard Hilbert.* 24 pages. M. .80.

In these two brochures Dr. Hilbert describes the sad religious conditions in the Protestant churches of Germany and suggests a remedy.

"Under the terrible experiences of the war," says the author, "thousands have, no doubt, found their God and have learned firmly to believe in their Lord and Savior; but, perhaps, more, both in the field and at home, did not know what to make of God, and have consciously forsaken the faith of their fathers. . . . Insubordination and unchastity, pleasure-madness and wild concupiscence, laziness and aversion to labor, contempt of all human and divine authority—all that we have, a falling away practically from Christianity as, perhaps, no one in our German nation would have believed it to be possible. We have pagan conditions in the very midst of Christendom. . . .

"There are country churches in the north which often had to omit their services, because not one single churchgoer came! And everybody knows that Sunday after Sunday in the large churches of many of the large cities not more than fifty people attended the services. . . .

"Immediately after confirmation the youth is lost to the church. . . . Our church-work proceeds on the supposition that we already have real congregations. But those who can and will see things as they are agree, we think, that we scarcely have real 'living churches' anywhere."

Quoting Martin Kaehler, the author closes his one brochure with these words: "The deplorable spiritual condition in Germany is to be found mainly in the fact that in Germany real mission-work has never been done. First the Irish monks came and bestowed upon us their pastoral care (*haben uns pastoriert*). The Reformation gave us many a Christian preacher, but no congregations. Now in many districts we have parishes, but no congregations. We must now do the mission-work which ought to have been done long ago."

The manner in which Dr. Hilbert would meet the situation in Germany disappoints us. The purpose of the sermon which is preached in the regular church service, he says, is neither to convert sinners, nor to lead the hearers to a deeper knowledge and better understanding of the Scriptures and to their application to spiritual needs. The sermon in the regular church service, he says, presupposes, as is indicated by the liturgy, that the people who come are Christians who need not be converted nor increase their spiritual knowledge, but who would be *edified*. Therefore, Dr. Hilbert says, "the Church cannot expect, much less ask, that its services be attended by those for whom they are not intended." For these, that is, for those without and also for those within who need to be led to a deeper and better understanding of the Bible, he would hold so-called "Bibelstunden."

The Bible conception of preaching is an altogether different one. Christ says, without restriction or limitation as to time, place, or people: "*Preach the Gospel.*" And Paul, bidding farewell to the elders of Ephesus, says:



"I have not shunned to declare unto you *all the counsel of God.*" And he bids these elders, the preachers of the church at Ephesus, "*to feed the Church of God,*" and he commends them and their people to "*God and to the Word of His grace, which,*" he says, "*is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.*" To Timothy the same Apostle writes: "Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." We are sure that Timothy did not understand that in the regular church service he was to preach the Word with restrictions and limitations, but that he was to preach it *so as to supply the needs of his hearers.* And that is the purpose of all preaching and religious teaching, whether in or out of the pulpit.

The "Bibelstunden" which Dr. Hilbert has in mind are similar to the instructions which we give to our adult catechumens. That for the ingathering of those who are without these will serve a real purpose, we, of course, do not deny. Their purpose, however, is not to do something essentially different from what is done by means of the sermon, but to give a quick, systematic, and comprehensive course in Christian doctrine for the purpose of preparing people for membership in the Lutheran Church.

And if we have so-called Bible-classes for young people and adults on Sundays or on other days, we do not have them for the purpose of giving them something essentially different from what we give them in the sermon, but for the purpose of giving them additional opportunities to increase their Bible knowledge.

We fear that Dr. Hilbert resembles the "reformers" before the Reformation, who, indeed, clearly noticed that conditions were not what they ought to have been, who deplored them, and felt the need of a change, *but who failed in their diagnosis and, therefore, also in their remedy.* We fail to read in his brochures that Dr. Hilbert understands that the real trouble in Germany, both before and after the war, is that the Protestant churches of Germany have forsaken the old Gospel of Jesus Christ, and that this has been their ruination and that of their country.

The pure Gospel of Jesus Christ as Luther taught it in Germany and confessed it before the Diet of Worms, that, and only that, is the remedy for the sad condition of the Church in Germany and elsewhere. If Dr. Hilbert and others in Germany will realize this, and then preach and teach this Gospel, the pure Word of God, in sermons and "Bibelstunden," as the opportunity presents itself, he will do the German people a real and much-needed service. For such "Volksmission" we wish him Godspeed! FRITZ.

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